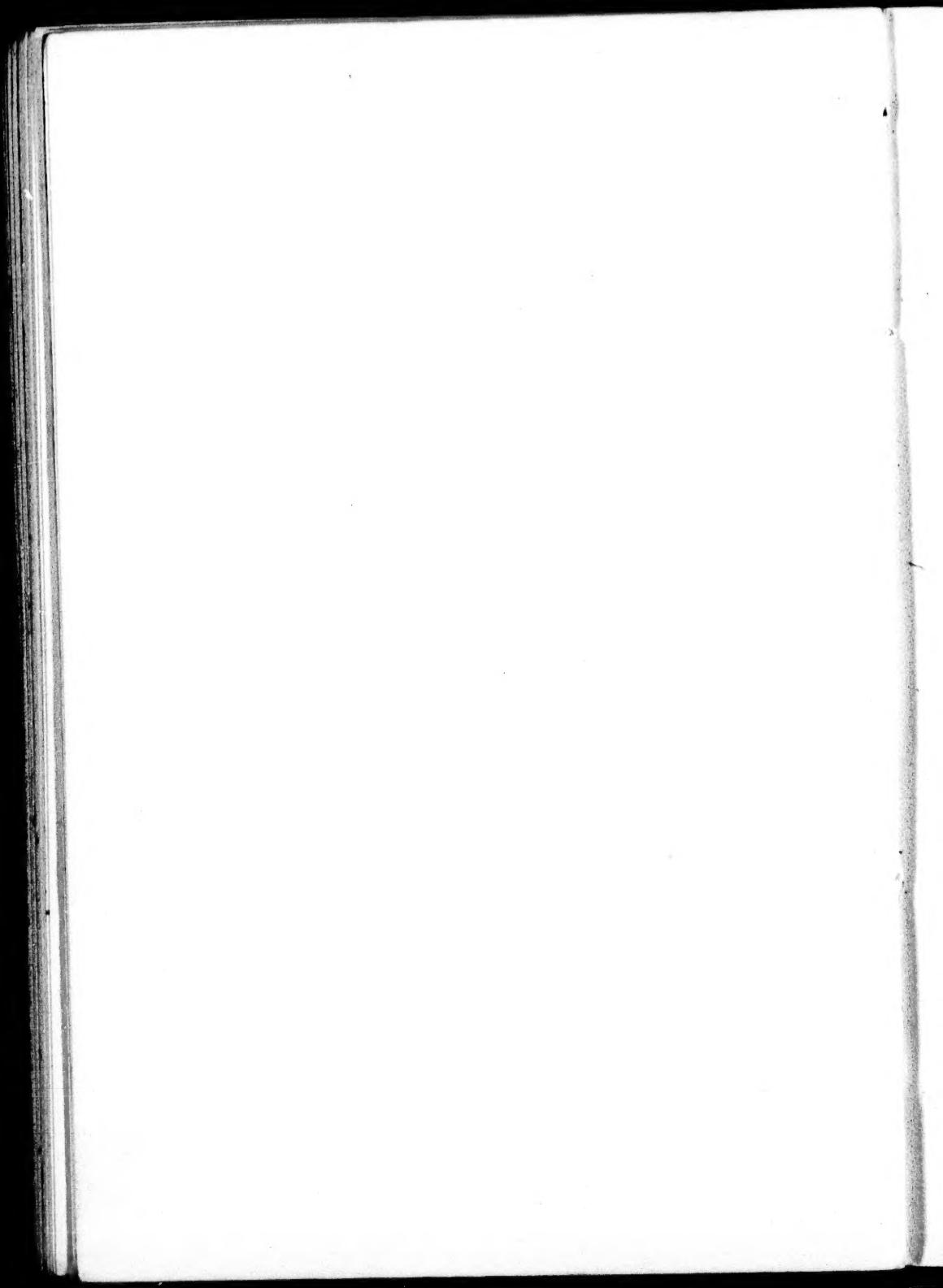


CURIOS DREAM
AND
OTHER SKETCHES



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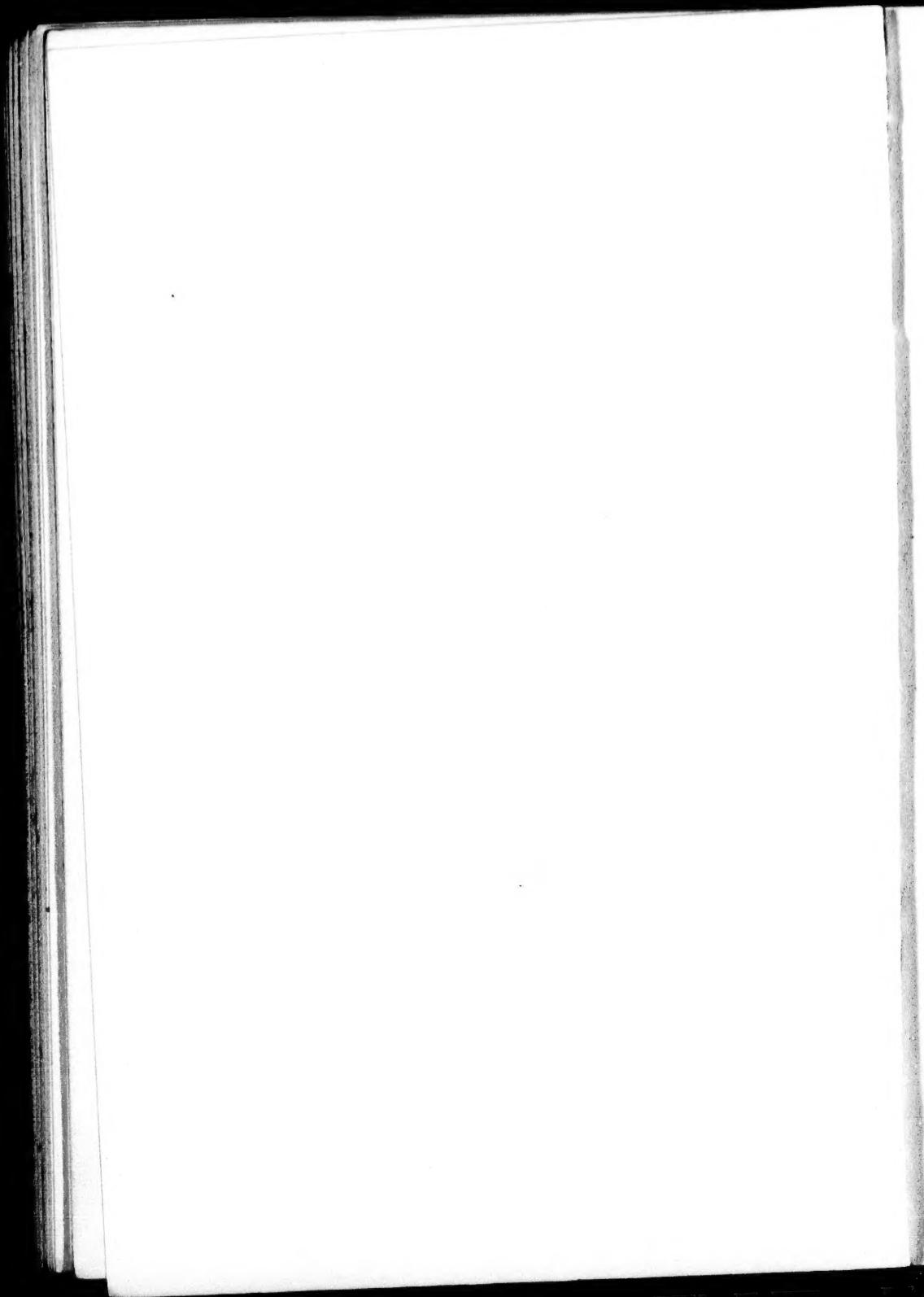
AND OTHER SKETCHES

BY
MARK TWAIN
AUTHOR OF "THE CELEBRATED JUMPING FROG"

SELECTED AND REVISED BY THE AUTHOR



TORONTO
THE MUSSON BOOK COMPANY, LIMITED



A CURIOUS DREAM.

CONTAINING A MORAL.

NIGHT before last I had a singular dream. I seemed to be sitting on a doorstep (in no particular city, perhaps), ruminating, and the time of night appeared to be about twelve or one o'clock. The weather was balmy and delicious. There was no human sound in the air, not even a footstep. There was no sound of any kind to emphasize the dead stillness, except the occasional hollow barking of a dog in the distance and the fainter answer of a further dog. Presently up the street I heard a bony clack-clacking, and guessed it was the castanets of a serenading party. In a minute more a tall skeleton, hooded, and half clad in a tattered and mouldy shroud

whose shreds were flapping about the ribby lattice-work of its person, swung by me with a stately stride, and disappeared in the grey gloom of the starlight. It had a broken and worm-eaten coffin on its shoulder and a bundle of something in its hand. I knew what the clack-clacking was then ; it was this party's joints working together, and his elbows knocking against his sides as he walked. I may say I was surprised. Before I could collect my thoughts and enter upon any speculations as to what this apparition might portend, I heard another one coming—for I recognised his clack-clack. He had two-thirds of a coffin on his shoulder, and some foot- and head-boards under his arm. I mightily wanted to peer under his hood and speak to him, but when he turned and smiled upon me with his cavernous sockets and his projecting grin as he went by, I thought I would not detain him. He was hardly gone when I heard the clacking again, and another one issued from the shadowy half-light. This one was bending under a heavy gravestone, and dragging a shabby coffin after him by a

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string. When he got to me he gave me a steady look for a moment or two, and then rounded to and backed up to me, saying :

“ Ease this down for a fellow, will you ?”

I eased the gravestone down till it rested on the ground, and in doing so noticed that it bore the name of “ John Baxter Copmanhurst,” with “ May, 1839,” as the date of his death. Deceased sat wearily down by me, and wiped his os frontis with his major maxillary—chiefly from former habit I judged, for I could not see that he brought away any perspiration.

“ It is too bad, too bad,” said he, drawing the remnant of the shroud about him and leaning his jaw pensively on his hand. Then he put his left foot up on his knee and fell to scratching his ankle bone absently with a rusty nail which he got out of his coffin.

“ What is too bad, friend ?”

“ Oh, everything, everything. I almost wish I never had died.”

“ You surprise me. Why do you say this ? Has anything gone wrong ? What is the matter ?”

A CURIOUS DREAM.

"Matter! Look at this shroud—rags. Look at this gravestone, all battered up. Look at that disgraceful old coffin. All a man's property going to ruin and destruction before his eyes, and ask him if anything is wrong? Fire and brimstone!"

"Calm yourself, calm yourself," I said. "It *is* too bad—it is certainly too bad, but then I had not supposed that you would much mind such matters, situated as you are."

"Well, my dear sir, I *do* mind them. My pride is hurt, and my comfort is impaired—destroyed, I might say. I will state my case—I will put it to you in such a way that you can comprehend it, if you will let me," said the poor skeleton, tilting the hood of his shroud back, as if he were clearing for action, and thus unconsciously giving himself a jaunty and festive air very much at variance with the grave character of his position in life—so to speak—and in prominent contrast with his distressful mood.

"Proceed," said I.

"I reside in the shameful old graveyard

a block or two above you here, in this street —there, now, I just expected that cartilage would let go!—third rib from the bottom, friend, hitch the end of it to my spine with a string, if you have got such a thing about you, though a bit of silver wire is a deal pleasanter, and more durable and becoming, if one keeps it polished—to think of shredding out and going to pieces in this way, just on account of the indifference and neglect of one's posterity!”—and the poor ghost grated his teeth in a way that gave me a wrench and a shiver—for the effect is mightily increased by the absence of muffling flesh and cuticle. “I reside in that old graveyard, and have for these thirty years; and I tell you things are changed since I first laid this old tired frame there, and turned over, and stretched out for a long sleep, with a delicious sense upon me of being *done* with bother, and grief, and anxiety, and doubt, and fear, for ever and ever, and listening with comfortable and increasing satisfaction to the sexton’s work, from the startling clatter of his first spadeful on my coffin till it dulled away to the faint

patting that shaped the roof of my new home —delicious! My! I wish you could try it to-night!" and out of my reverie deceased fetched me with a rattling slap with a bony hand.

"Yes, sir, thirty years ago I laid me down there, and was happy. For it was out in the country, then—out in the breezy, flowery, grand old woods, and the lazy winds gossiped with the leaves, and the squirrels capered over us and around us, and the creeping things visited us, and the birds filled the tranquil solitude with music. Ah, it was worth ten years of a man's life to be dead then! Everything was pleasant. I was in a good neighbourhood, for all the dead people that lived near me belonged to the best families in the city. Our posterity appeared to think the world of us. They kept our graves in the very best condition; the fences were always in faultless repair, headboards were kept painted or whitewashed, and were replaced with new ones as soon as they began to look rusty or decayed; monuments were kept upright, railings intact and

bright, the rosebushes and shrubbery trimmed, trained, and free from blemish, the walks clean and smooth and gravelled. But that day is gone by. Our descendants have forgotten us. My grandson lives in a stately house built with money made by these old hands of mine, and I sleep in a neglected grave with invading vermin that gnaw my shroud to build them nests withal! I and friends that lie with me founded and secured the prosperity of this fine city, and the stately bantling of our loves leaves us to rot in a dilapidated cemetery which neighbours curse and strangers scoff at. See the difference between the old time and this, for instance. Our graves are all caved in, now; our head-boards have rotted away and tumbled down; our railings reel this way and that, with one foot in the air, after a fashion of unseemly levity; our monuments lean wearily, and our gravestones bow their heads discouraged; there be no adornments any more—no roses, nor shrubs, nor gravelled walks, nor anything that is a comfort to the eye, and even the paintless old board fence that did make a show of holding

us sacred from companionship with beasts and the defilement of heedless feet, has tottered till it overhangs the street, and only advertises the presence of our dismal resting-place and invites yet more derision to it. And now we cannot hide our poverty and tatters in the friendly woods, for the city has stretched its withering arms abroad and taken us in, and all that remains of the cheer of our old home is the cluster of lugubrious forest trees that stand, bored and weary of city life, with their feet in our coffins, looking into the hazy distance and wishing they were there. I tell you it is disgraceful !

" You begin to comprehend—you begin to see how it is. While our descendants are living sumptuously on our money, right around us in the city, we have to fight hard to keep skull and bones together. Bless you, there isn't a grave in our cemetery that doesn't leak—not one. Every time it rains in the night we have to climb out and roost in the trees—and sometimes we are wakened suddenly by the chilly water trickling down the back of our necks. Then I tell you there is

a general heaving up of old graves and kicking over of old monuments, and scampering of old skeletons for the trees! Bless me, if you had gone along there some such nights after twelve you might have seen as many as fifteen of us roosting on one limb, with our joints rattling drearily and the wind wheezing through our ribs! Many a time we have perched there for three or four dreary hours, and then come down, stiff and chilled through and drowsy, and borrowed each other's skulls to bale out our graves with—if you will glance up in my mouth, now as I tilt my head back, you can see that my head-piece is half full of old dry sediment—how top-heavy and stupid it makes me sometimes! Yes, sir, many a time if you had happened to come along just before the dawn you'd have caught us baling out the graves and hanging our shrouds on the fence to dry. Why, I had an elegant shroud stolen from there one morning—think a party by the name of Smith took it, that resides in a plebeian graveyard over yonder—I think so because the first time I ever saw him he hadn't anything on but a

check-shirt, and the last time I saw him, which was at a social gathering in the new cemetery, he was the best dressed corpse in the company—and it is a significant fact that he left when he saw me; and presently an old woman from here missed her coffin—she generally took it with her when she went anywhere, because she was liable to take cold and bring on the spasmodic rheumatism that originally killed her if she exposed herself to the night air much. She was named Hotchkiss—Anna Matilda Hotchkiss—you might know her? She has two upper front teeth, is tall, but a good deal inclined to stoop, one rib on the left side gone, has one shred of rusty hair hanging from the left side of her head, and one little tuft just above and a little forward of her right ear, has her under jaw wired on one side where it had worked loose, small bone of left forearm gone—lost in a fight—has a kind of swagger in her gait and a ‘gallus’ way of going with her arms akimbo and her nostrils in the air—has been pretty free and easy, and is all damaged and battered up till she looks like a

queensware crate in ruins—maybe you have met her?"

"God forbid!" I involuntarily ejaculated, for somehow I was not looking for that form of question, and it caught me a little off my guard. But I hastened to make amends for my rudeness and say, "I simply meant I had not had the honour—for I would not deliberately speak discourteously of a friend of yours. You were saying that you were robbed—and it was a shame, too—but it appears by what is left of the shroud you have on that it was a costly one in its day. How did—"

A most ghastly expression began to develop among the decayed features and shrivelled integuments of my guest's face, and I was beginning to grow uneasy and distressed, when he told me he was only working up a deep, sly smile, with a wink in it, to suggest that about the time he acquired his present garment a ghost in a neighbouring cemetery missed one. This reassured me, but I begged him to confine himself to speech thenceforth, because his facial expres-

sion was uncertain. Even with the most elaborate care it was liable to miss fire. Smiling should especially be avoided. What *he* might honestly consider a shining success was likely to strike me in a very different light. I said I liked to see a skeleton cheerful, even decorously playful, but I did not think smiling was a skeleton's best hold.

"Yes, friend," said the poor skeleton, "the facts are just as I have given them to you. Two of these old graveyards—the one that I resided in and one further along—have been deliberately neglected by our descendants of to-day until there is no occupying them any longer. Aside from the osteological discomfort of it—and that is no light matter this rainy weather—the present state of things is ruinous to property. We have got to move or be content to see our effects wasted away and utterly destroyed. Now you will hardly believe it, but it is true nevertheless, that there isn't a single coffin in good repair among all my acquaintance—now that is an absolute fact. I do not refer to low people who come in a pine box mounted on an

express wagon, but I am talking about your high-toned, silver-mounted burial-case, monumental sort, that travel under black plumes at the head of a procession and have choice of cemetery lots—I mean folks like the Jarvises, and the Bledsoes and Burlings, and such. They are all about ruined. The most substantial people in our set, they were. And now look at them—utterly used up and poverty-stricken. One of the Bledsoes actually traded his monument to a late bar-keeper for some fresh shavings to put under his head. I tell you it speaks volumes, for there is nothing a corpse takes so much pride in as his monument. He loves to read the inscription. He comes after awhile to believe what it says himself, and then you may see him sitting on the fence night after night enjoying it. Epitaphs are cheap, and they do a poor chap a world of good after he is dead, especially if he had hard luck while he was alive. I wish they were used more. Now I don't complain, but confidentially I *do* think it was a little shabby in my descendants to give me nothing but this old slab of a

gravestone—and all the more that there isn't a compliment on it. It used to have

'GONE TO HIS JUST REWARD'

on it, and I was proud when I first saw it, but by-and-by I noticed that whenever an old friend of mine came along he would hook his chin on the railing and pull a long face and read along down till he came to that, and then he would chuckle to himself and walk off, looking satisfied and comfortable. So I scratched it off to get rid of those fools. But a dead man always takes a deal of pride in his monument. Yonder goes half-a-dozen of the Jarvises, now, with the family monument along. And Smithers and some hired spectres went by with his a while ago. Hello, Higgins, good-by, old friend! That's Meredith Higgins—died in '44—belongs to our set in the cemetery—fine old family—great-grandmother was an Injun—I am on the most familiar terms with him—he didn't hear me was the reason he didn't answer me. And I am sorry, too, because I would have liked to introduce you. You would admire him. He

is the most disjointed, sway-backed, and generally distorted old skeleton you ever saw, but he is full of fun. When he laughs it sounds like rasping two stones together, and he always starts it off with a cheery screech like raking a nail across a window-pane. Hey, Jones! That is old Columbus Jones—shroud cost four hundred dollars—entire trousseau, including monument, twenty-seven hundred. This was in the Spring of '26. It was enormous style for those days. Dead people came all the way from the Alleghanies to see his things—the party that occupied the grave next to mine remembers it well. Now do you see that individual going along with a piece of a head-board under his arm, one leg-bone below his knee gone, and not a thing in the world on? That is Barstow Dalhouse, and next to Columbus Jones he was the most sumptuously outfitted person that ever entered our cemetery. We are all leaving. We cannot tolerate the treatment we are receiving at the hands of our descendants. They open new cemeteries, but they leave us to our ignominy. They mend the streets, but they never

mend anything that is about us or belongs to us. Look at that coffin of mine—yet I tell you in its day it was a piece of furniture that would have attracted attention in any drawing-room in this city. You may have it if you want it—I can't afford to repair it. Put a new bottom in her, and part of a new top, and a bit of fresh lining along the left side, and you'll find her about as comfortable as any receptacle of her species you ever tried. No thanks—no, don't mention it—you have been civil to me, and I would give you all the property I have got before I would seem ungrateful. Now this winding-sheet is a kind of a sweet thing in its way, if you would like to _____. No? Well, just as you say, but I wished to be fair and liberal—there's nothing mean about *me*. Good-by, friend, I must be going. I may have a good way to go to-night—don't know. I only know one thing for certain, and that is, that I am on the emigrant trail, now, and I'll never sleep in that crazy old cemetery again. I will travel till I find respectable quarters, if I have to hoof it to New Jersey. All the boys are

going. It was decided in public conclave, last night, to emigrate, and by the time the sun rises there won't be a bone left in our old habitations. Such cemeteries may suit my surviving friends, but they do not suit the remains that have the honour to make these remarks. My opinion is the general opinion. If you doubt it, go and see how the departing ghosts upset things before they started. They were almost riotous in their demonstrations of distaste. Hello, here are some of the Bledsoes, and if you will give me a lift with this tombstone I guess I will join company and jog along with them—mighty respectable old family, the Bledsoes, and used to always come out in six-horse hearses, and all that sort of thing fifty years ago when I walked these streets in daylight. Good-by, friend."

And with his gravestone on his shoulder he joined the grisly procession, dragging his damaged coffin after him, for notwithstanding he pressed it upon me so earnestly, I utterly refused his hospitality. I suppose that for as much as two hours these sad outcasts went clacking by, laden with their dismal

effects, and all that time I sat pitying them. One or two of the youngest and least dilapidated among them inquired about midnight trains on the railways, but the rest seemed unacquainted with that mode of travel, and merely asked about common public roads to various towns and cities, some of which are not on the map now, and vanished from it and from the earth as much as thirty years ago, and some few of them never *had* existed anywhere but on maps, and private ones in real estate agencies at that. And they asked about the condition of the cemeteries in these towns and cities, and about the reputation the citizens bore as to reverence for the dead.

This whole matter interested me deeply, and likewise compelled my sympathy for these homeless ones. And it all seeming real, and I not knowing it was a dream, I mentioned to one shrouded wanderer an idea that had entered my head to publish an account of this curious and very sorrowful exodus, but said also that I could not describe it truthfully, and just as it occurred, without seeming to trifle with a grave subject and exhibit an

Irreverence for the dead that would shock and distress their surviving friends. But this bland and stately remnant of a former citizen leaned him far over my gate and whispered in my ear, and said :—

“ Do not let that disturb you. The community that can stand such graveyards as those we are emigrating from can stand anything a body can say about the neglected and forsaken dead that lie in them.”

At that very moment a cock crowed, and the weird procession vanished and left not a shred or a bone behind. I awoke, and found myself lying with my head out of the bed and “sagging” downwards considerably—a position favourable to dreaming dreams with morals in them, maybe, but not poetry.

NOTE.—The reader is assured that if the cemeteries in his town are kept in good order, this Dream is not levelled at his town at all, but is levelled particularly and venomously at the *next* town.

A NEW BEECHER CHURCH.

IF the Rev. Mr. Smith, or the Rev. Mr. Jones, or the Rev. Mr. Brown, were about to build a new church edifice, it would be projected on the same old pattern, and be like pretty much all the other churches in the country, and so I would naturally mention it as a new Presbyterian church, or a new Methodist, or a new Baptist church, and never think of calling it by the pastor's name ; but when a Beecher projects a church, that edifice is necessarily going to be something entirely fresh and original; it is not going to be like any other church in the world ; it is going to be as variegated, eccentric, and marked with as peculiar and striking an individuality as a Beecher himself ; it is going to have a deal more Beecher in it than any

one narrow creed can fit into without rattling, or any one arbitrary order of architecture can symmetrically enclose and cover. Consequently to call it simply a Congregational church would not give half an idea of the thing. There is only one word broad enough, and wide enough, and deep enough to take in the whole affair, and express it cleanly, luminously, and concisely—and that is *Beecher*. The projected edifice I am about to speak of is, therefore, properly named in my caption as a new "*Beecher Church.*"

The projector is the Rev. Thomas K. Beecher—brother of the other one, of course—I never knew but one Beecher that wasn't, and *he* was a nephew. The new church is to be built in Elmira, N. Y., where Mr. B. has been preaching to one and the same congregation for the last sixteen years, and is thoroughly esteemed and beloved by his people. I have had opportunity to hear all about the new church, for I have lately been visiting in Elmira.

Now, when one has that disease which

gives its possessor the title of "humorist," he must make oath to his statements, else the public will not believe him. Therefore I make solemn oath that what I am going to tell about the new church is the strict truth.

The main building—for there are to be three, massed together in a large grassy square, ornamented with quite a forest of shade trees—will be the church proper. It will be lofty, in order to secure good air and ventilation. The auditorium will be *circular*—an amphitheatre, after the ordinary pattern of an opera-house, *without galleries*. It is to seat a thousand persons. On one side (or one end, if you choose) will be an ample, raised platform for the minister, the rear half of which will be occupied by the organ and the choir. Before the minister will be the circling amphitheatre of pews, the first thirty or forty on the level floor, and the next rising in graduated tiers to the walls. The seats on the level floor will be occupied by the aged and infirm, who can enter the church through a hall under the speaker's platform,

without climbing any stairs. The people occupying the raised tiers will enter by a dozen doors opening into the church from a lobby like an opera-house lobby, and descend the various aisles to their places. In case of fire or earthquakes, these numerous exits will be convenient and useful.

No space is to be wasted. Under the raised tiers of pews are to be stalls for horses and carriages, so that these may be sheltered from sun and rain. There will be twenty-four of these stalls, each stall to be entered by an arch of ornamental masonry—no doors to open or shut. Consequently, the outside base of the church will have a formidable port-holed look, like a man-of-war. The stalls are to be so mailed with "deadeners," and so thoroughly plastered, that neither sound nor smell can ascend to the church and offend the worshippers. The horses will be in attendance at church but an hour or two at a time, of course, and can defile the stalls but little; an immediate cleansing after they leave is to set that all right again.

There is to be no steeple on the church—

merely because no practical use can be made of it.

There is to be no bell, because all men know what time church service begins without that exasperating nuisance. In explanation of this remark, I will state that at home I suffer in the vicinity and under the distracting clangour of thirteen church bells, all of whom (is that right?) clamour at once, and no two in accord. A large part of my time is taken up in devising cruel and unusual sufferings and in fancy inflicting them on those bell-ringers and having a good time.

The second building is to be less lofty than the church; is to be built right against the rear of it, and communicate with it by a door. It is to have two stories. On the first floor will be three distinct Sunday school rooms; all large, but one considerably larger than the other two. The Sunday school connected with Mr. Beecher's church has always been a "graded" one, and each department singularly thorough in its grade of instruction; the pupil wins his advancement to the higher grades by hard-won pro-

ficiency, not by mere added years. The largest of the three compartments will be used as the main Sunday school room, and for the week-day evening lecture.

The whole upper story of this large building will be well lighted and ventilated, and occupied wholly as a play-room for the children of the church, and it will stand open and welcome to them through all the weekdays. They can fill it with their playthings if they choose, and besides it will be furnished with dumb-bells, swings, rocking-horses, and all such matters as children delight in. The idea is to make a child look upon a church as only another *home*, and a sunny one, rather than as a dismal exile or a prison.

The third building will be less lofty than the second; it will adjoin the rear of the second, and communicate with it by a door or doors. It will consist of three stories. Like the other two buildings, it will cover considerable ground. On the first floor will be the "church parlours" where the usual social gatherings of modern congregations

are held. On the same floor, and opening into the parlours, will be a reception-room and also a circulating library—a *free* library—not simply free to the church membership, but to everybody, just as is the present library of Mr. Beecher's church (and few libraries are more extensively and more diligently and gratefully used than this one). Also on this first floor, and communicating with the parlours, will be—tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon!—six *bath-rooms!*—hot and cold water—free tickets issued to any applicant among the unclean of the congregation! The idea is sound and sensible, for this reason. Many members of all congregations have no good bathing facilities, and are not able to pay for them at the barber-shops without feeling the expense; and yet a luxurious bath is a thing that all civilized beings greatly enjoy and derive healthful benefit from. The church buildings are to be heated by steam, and consequently the waste steam can be very judiciously utilised in the proposed bath-rooms. In speaking of this bath-room project, I have

revealed a state secret—but I never could keep one of any kind, state or otherwise. Even the congregation were not to know of this matter, the building committee were to leave it unmentioned in their report; but I got hold of it—and from a member of that committee, too—and I had rather part with one of my hind legs than keep still about it. The bath-rooms are unquestionably to be built, and so why not tell it?

In the second story of this third building will be the permanent residence of the “church missionary,” a lady who constantly looks after the poor and sick of the church; also a set of lodging and living rooms for the janitors (or janitresses?—for they will be women, Mr. Beecher holding that women are tidier and more efficient in such a position than men, and that they ought to dwell upon the premises and give them their undivided care); also on this second floor are to be six rooms to do duty as a church infirmary for the sick poor of the congregation, this church having always supported and taken care of its own unfortunates instead of leaving them

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to the public charity. In the infirmary will be kept one or two water-beds (for invalids whose pains will not allow them to lie on a less yielding substance), and half-a-dozen reclining invalid-chairs on wheels. The water-beds and invalid-chairs at present belonging to the church are always in demand and never out of service. Part of the appurtenances of the new church will be a horse and an easy vehicle, to be kept and driven by a janitor, and used wholly for giving the church's indigent invalids air and exercise. It is found that such an establishment is daily needed—so much so, indeed, as to almost amount to a church necessity.

The third story of this third building is to be occupied as the church *kitchen*, and it is sensibly placed aloft, so that the ascending noises and boarding-house smells shall go up and aggravate the birds instead of the saints —except such of the latter as are above the clouds, and they can easily keep out of the way of it, no doubt. Dumb-waiters will carry the food *down* to the church parlours, instead of up. Why is it that nobody has

thought of the simple wisdom of this arrangement before? Is it for a church to step forward and tell us how to get rid of kitchen smells and noises? If it be asked why the new church will need a kitchen, I remind the reader of the infirmary occupants, etc. They must eat; and, besides, social gatherings of members of this congregation meet at the church parlours as often as three and four evenings a week, and sew, drink tea, and g—. G—. It commences with g, I think, but somehow I cannot think of the word. The new church parlours will be large, and it is intended that these social gatherings shall be promoted and encouraged, and that they shall take an added phase, viz.: when several families want to indulge in a little reunion, and have not room in their small houses at home, they can have it in the church parlours. You will notice in every feature of this new church one predominant idea and purpose always discernible—the banding together of the congregation as a *family*, and the making of the church a *home*. You see it in the play-room, the library, the

parlours, the baths, the infirmary—it is everywhere. It is the great central, ruling idea. To entirely consummate such a thing would be impossible with nearly any other congregation in the Union; but after sixteen years of moulding and teaching, Mr. Beecher has made it wholly possible and practicable with this one. It is not stretching metaphor too far to say that he is the father of his people, and his church their mother.

If the new church project is a curiosity, it is still but an inferior curiosity compared to the plan of raising the money for it. One could have told, with his eyes shut and one hand tied behind him, that it originated with a Beecher—I was going to say with a lunatic, but the success of the plan robs me of the opportunity.

When it was decided to build a new church edifice at a cost of not less than 40,000 dollars nor more than 50,000 dollars (for the membership is not three hundred and fifty strong, and there are not six men in it who can strictly be called rich), Mr. Beecher gave to each member a printed circular worded as

follows—each circular enclosed in an envelope prepaid and addressed to himself, to be returned through the post-office:

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

It is proposed to build a meeting-house and other rooms for the use of the church. To do this work honestly and well, it is proposed to spend *one year* in raising a part of the money *in advance*, and in getting plans and making contracts.

I year—plans and contracts . . . Ap. 1, 1871, to 1872
" " build and cover in . . . " 1872, " 1873
" " plaster, finish, and furnish, " 1873, " 1874
" " pay for in full and dedicate, " 1874, " 1875

It is proposed to expend not less than twenty thousand dollars nor more than fifty thousand—according to the ability shown by the returns of these cards of *confidential* subscription. Any member of the Church and congregation, or any friend of the Church, is allowed and invited to subscribe, but no one is urged.

T. K. BEECHER, Pastor. |

To help build our meeting-house, I think that I shall be able to give not less than \$, and not more than \$, each year for four years, beginning April 1, 1871.

Or I can make in one payment \$.

Trusting in the Lord to help me, I hereby subscribe the same as noted above.

Name,
Residence,

The subscriptions were to be wholly *voluntary* and strictly *confidential*; no one was to know the amount of a man's subscription except himself and the minister; nobody was *urged* to give anything at all; all were simply invited to give whatever sum they felt was right and just, from ten cents upward, and no questions asked, no criticisms made, no revelations uttered. There was no possible chance for glory, for even though a man gave his whole fortune nobody would ever know it. I do not know when anything has struck me as being so utopian, so absurdly romantic, so ignorant, on its face, of human nature. And so anybody would have thought. Parties said Mr. Beecher had "educated" his people, and that each would give as he privately felt able, and not bother about the glory. I believed human nature to be a more potent educator than any minister, and that the result would show it. But I was wrong. At the end of a month or two, some two-thirds of the circulars had wended back, one by one, to the pastor, silently and secretly, through the post-office, and then, without mentioning

the name of any giver or the amount of his gift, Mr. Beecher announced from the pulpit that all the money needed was pledged—the *certain* amount being over 45,000 dollars, and the possible amount over 53,000 dollars! When the remainder of the circulars have come in, it is confidently expected and believed that they will add to these amounts a sum of not less than 10,000 dollars. A great many subscriptions from children and working men consisted of cash enclosures ranging from a ten cent currency stamp up to five, ten, and fifteen dollars. As I said before, the plan of levying the building tax, and the success of the plan, are much more curious and surprising than the exceedingly curious edifice the money is to create.

The reason the moneys are to be paid in four annual instalments—for that is the plan—is, partly to make the payments easy, but chiefly because the church is to be substantially built, and its several parts allowed time to settle and season, each in its turn. For instance, the substructures will be allowed a good part of the first year to settle and com-

pact themselves, after completion ; the walls the second year, and so forth and so on. There is to be no work done by contract, and no unseasoned wood used. The materials are to be sound and good ; and honest, competent, conscientious workmen (Beecher says there are such, the opinion of the world to the contrary notwithstanding) hired at full wages, by the day, to put them together.

The above statements are all true and genuine, according to the oath I have already made thereto, and which I am now about to repeat before a notary, in legal form, with my hand upon the Book. Consequently we are going to have at least one sensible, but very, very curious church in America.

I am aware that I had no business to tell all these matters, but the reporter instinct was strong upon me and I could not help it. And besides they were in everybody's mouth in Elmira, anyway.

MY LATE SENATORIAL SECRETARYSHIP.

I AM not a private secretary to a senator any more, now. I held the berth two months in security and in great cheerfulness of spirit, but my bread began to return from over the waters, then—that is to say, my works came back and revealed themselves. I judged it best to resign. The way of it was this. My employer sent for me one morning tolerably early, and, as soon as I had finished inserting some conundrums clandestinely into his last great speech upon finance, I entered the presence. There was something portentous in his appearance. His cravat was untied, his hair was in a state of disorder, and his countenance bore about it the signs of a suppressed storm,

He held a package of letters in his tense grasp, and I knew that the dreaded Pacific mail was in. He said :

"I thought you were worthy of confidence."

I said : "Yes, sir."

He said : "I gave you a letter from certain of my constituents in the State of Nevada, asking the establishment of a post-office at Baldwin's Ranch, and told you to answer it, as ingeniously as you could, with arguments which should persuade them that there was no real necessity for an office at that place."

I felt easier. "Oh, if that is all, sir, I *did* do that."

"Yes, you *did*. I will read your answer, for your own humiliation :

"' WASHINGTON, Nov. 24.

"' *Messrs. Smith, Jones, and others.*

"' GENTLEMEN,—What the mischief do you suppose you want with a post-office at Baldwin's Ranch? It would not do you any good. If any letters came there, you couldn't read them, you know; and, besides, such letters as ought to pass through, with money in them, for other localities, would not be likely to *get* through, you must perceive at once; and that would make trouble for us all. No, don't bother about a post-office in your camp. I have your best interests at heart, and feel that

It would only be an ornamental folly. What you want is a nice jail, you know—a nice, substantial jail and a free school. These will be a lasting benefit to you. These will make you really contented and happy. I will move in the matter at once.

"Very truly, etc.,

"MARK TWAIN,
"For James W. N—, U. S. Senator."

"That is the way you answered that letter. Those people say they will hang me, if I ever enter that district again; and I am perfectly satisfied they *will*, too."

"Well, sir, I did not know I was doing any harm. I only wanted to convince them."

"Ah. Well, you *did* convince them, I make no manner of doubt. Now, here is another specimen. I gave you a petition from certain gentlemen of Nevada, praying that I would get a bill through Congress incorporating the Methodist Episcopal Church of the State of Nevada. I told you to say, in reply, that the creation of such a law came more properly within the province of the State Legislature; and to endeavour to show them that, in the present feebleness of the religious element in that new commonwealth, the expe-

dency of incorporating the church was questionable. What did you write?

" " WASHINGTON, Nov 24.

" " *Rev. John Halifax and others.*

" " GENTLEMEN,—You will have to go to the State Legislature about that speculation of yours—Congress don't know anything about religion. But don't you hurry to go there, either; because this thing you propose to do out in that new country isn't expedient—in fact, it is ridiculous. Your religious people there are too feeble, in intellect, in morality, in piety—in everything, pretty much. You had better drop this—you can't make it work. You can't issue stock on an incorporation like that—or if you could, it would only keep you in trouble all the time. The other denominations would abuse it, and "bear" it, and "sell it short," and break it down. They would do with it just as they would with one of your silver mines out there—they would try to make all the world believe it was "wildcat." You ought not to do anything that is calculated to bring a sacred thing into disrepute. You ought to be ashamed of yourselves—that is what *I* think about it. You close your petition with the words: "And we will ever pray." I think you had better—you need to do it.

" " Very truly, etc.,

" " MARK TWAIN,

" " For James W. N——, U. S. Senator."

" That luminous epistle finishes me with

the religious element among my constituents. But that my political murder might be made sure, some evil instinct prompted me to hand you this memorial from the grave company of elders composing the Board of Aldermen of the city of San Francisco, to try your hand upon—a memorial praying that the city's right to the water-lots upon the city front might be established by law of Congress. I told you this was a dangerous matter to move in. I told you to write a non-committal letter to the Aldermen—an ambiguous letter—a letter that should avoid, as far as possible, all real consideration and discussion of the water-lot question. If there is any feeling left in you—any shame—surely this letter you wrote, in obedience to that order, ought to evoke it, when its words fall upon your ears :

" " WASHINGTON, Nov. 27.

" " *The Hon. Board of Aldermen, etc.*

" " GENTLEMEN,—George Washington, the revered Father of his Country, is dead. His long and brilliant career is closed, alas! for ever. He was greatly respected in this section of the country, and his untimely decease cast a gloom over the whole community. He died on

the 14th day of December, 1799. He passed peacefully away from the scene of his honours and his great achievements, the most lamented hero and the best beloved that ever earth hath yielded unto Death. At such a time as this you speak of water-lots!—what a lot was his!

“ ‘What is fame? Fame is an accident. Sir Isaac Newton discovered an apple falling to the ground—a trivial discovery, truly, and one which a million men had made before him—but his parents were influential, and so they tortured that small circumstance into something wonderful, and, lo! the simple world took up the shout, and, in almost the twinkling of an eye, that man was famous. Treasure these thoughts.

“ ‘Poesy, sweet poesy, who shall estimate what the world owes to thee! ’

“ ‘Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow—
And everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go.’ ”

“ ‘Jack and Gill went up the hill
To draw a pail of water;
Jack fell down and broke his crown,
And Gill came tumbling after.’ ”

For simplicity, elegance of diction, and freedom from immoral tendencies, I regard those two poems in the light of gems. They are suited to all grades of intelligence, to every sphere of life—to the field, to the nursery, to the guild. Especially should no Board of Aldermen be without them.

“ ‘Venerable fossils! write again. Nothing improves one so much as friendly correspondence. Write again—and if there is anything in this memorial of yours that refers to anything in particular, do not be backward

about explaining it. We shall always be happy to hear you chirp.

"Very truly, etc.,

"MARK TWAIN,

"For James W. N—, U. S. Senator.'

"That is an atrocious, a ruinous epistle! Distraction!"

"Well, sir, I am really sorry if there is anything wrong about it—but—but—it appears to me to dodge the water-lot question."

"Dodge the mischief! Oh!—but never mind. As long as destruction must come now, let it be complete. Let it be complete—let this last of your performances, which I am about to read, make a finality of it. I am a ruined man. I *had* my misgivings when I gave you the letter from Humboldt, asking that the post route from Indian Gulch to Shakspeare Gap and intermediate points, be changed partly to the old Mormon trail. But I told you it was a delicate question, and warned you to deal with it deftly—to answer it dubiously, and leave them a little in the dark. And your fatal imbecility impelled you to make *this* dis-

astrous reply. I should think you would stop your ears, if you are not dead to all shame :

" " WASHINGTON, Nov. 30.

" " *Messrs. Perkins, Wagner, et al.*

" " GENTLEMEN,—It is a delicate question about this Indian trail, but, handled with proper deftness and dubiousness, I doubt not we shall succeed in some measure or otherwise, because the place where the route leaves the Lassen Meadows, over beyond where those two Shawnee chiefs, Dilapidated-Vengeance and Biter-of-the-Clouds, were scalped last winter, this being the favourite direction to some, but others preferring something else in consequence of things, the Mormon trail leaving Mosby's at three in the morning, and passing through Jawbone Flat to Blucher, and then down by Jug-Handle, the road passing to the right of it, and naturally leaving it on the right too, and Dawson's on the left of the trail where it passes to the left of said Dawson's, and onward thence to Tomahawk, thus making the route cheaper, easier of access to all who can get at it, and compassing all the desirable objects so considered by others, and, therefore, conferring the most good upon the greatest number, and, consequently, I am encouraged to hope we shall. However, I shall be ready, and happy, to afford you still further information upon the subject, from time to time, as you may desire it and the Post Office Department be enabled to furnish it to me.

" " Very truly, etc.,

" " MARK TWAIN,
" " For James W. N——, U.S. Senator.

"There—now, *what* do you think of that?"

"Well, I don't know, sir. It—well, it appears to me—to be dubious enough."

"Du—leave the house! I am a ruined man. Those Humboldt savages never will forgive me for tangling their brains up with this inhuman letter. I have lost the respect of the Methodist Church, the Board of Aldermen—"

"Well, I haven't anything to say about that, because I may have missed it a little in their cases, but I *was* too many for the Baldwin's Ranch people, General!"

"Leave the house! Leave it for ever and for ever, too!"

I regarded that as a sort of covert intimation that my services could be dispensed with, and so I resigned. I never will be a private secretary to a senator again. You can't please that kind of people. They don't know anything. They can't appreciate a party's efforts,

THE FACTS IN THE CASE OF GEORGE FISHER, DECEASED.

THIS is history. It is not a wild extravaganza, like "John Williamson Mackenzie's Great Beef Contract," but is a plain statement of facts and circumstances with which the Congress of the United States has interested itself from time to time during the long period of half a century.

I will not call this matter of George Fisher's a great deathless and unrelenting swindle upon the Government and people of the United States—for it has never been so decided, and I hold that it is a grave and solemn wrong for a writer to cast slurs or call names when such is the case—but will simply present the evidence and let the reader deduce his own

verdict. Then we shall do nobody injustice, and our consciences shall be clear.

On or about the 1st day of September, 1813, the Creek war being then in progress in Florida, the crops, herds, and houses of Mr. George Fisher, a citizen, were destroyed, either by the Indians or by the United States troops in pursuit of them. By the terms of the law, if the *Indians* destroyed the property, there was no relief for Fisher; but if the *troops* destroyed it, the Government of the United States was debtor to Fisher for the amount involved.

George Fisher must have considered that the *Indians* destroyed the property, because, although he lived several years afterward, he does not appear to have ever made any claim upon the Government.

In the course of time Fisher died, and his widow married again. And, by-and-by, nearly twenty years after that dimly remembered raid upon Fisher's cornfields, *the widow Fisher's new husband* petitioned Congress for pay for the property, and backed up the petition with many depositions and affidavits which pur-

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ported to prove that the troops, and not the Indians, destroyed the property; that the troops, for some inscrutable reason, deliberately burned down "houses" (or cabins) valued at 600 dollars, the same belonging to a peaceable private citizen, and also destroyed various other property belonging to the same citizen. But Congress declined to believe that the troops were such idiots (after overtaking and scattering a band of Indians proved to have been found destroying Fisher's property) as to calmly continue the work of destruction themselves and make a complete job of what the Indians had only commenced. So Congress denied the petition of the heirs of George Fisher in 1832, and did not pay them a cent.

We hear no more from them officially until 1848, sixteen years after their first attempt on the Treasury, and a full generation after the death of the man whose fields were destroyed. The new generation of Fisher heirs then came forward and put in a bill for damages. The Second Auditor awarded them 8,873 dollars, being half the damage sustained by Fisher.

The Auditor said the testimony showed that at least half the destruction was done by the Indians "*before the troops started in pursuit,*" and of course the Government was not responsible for that half.

2. That was in April, 1848. In December, 1848, the heirs of George Fisher, deceased, came forward and pleaded for a "revision" of their bill of damages. The revision was made, but nothing new could be found in their favour except an error of 100 dollars in the former calculation. However, in order to keep up the spirits of the Fisher family, the Auditor concluded to go back and allow *interest* from the date of the first petition (1832) to the date when the bill of damages was awarded. This sent the Fishers home happy with sixteen years' interest on 8,873 dollars—the same amounting to 8,997 dollars 94 cents. Total, 17,870 dollars 94 cents.

3. For an entire year the suffering Fisher family remained quiet—even satisfied, after a fashion. Then they swooped down upon Government with their wrongs once more. That old patriot, Attorney-General Toucey,

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burrowed through the musty papers of the Fishers and discovered one more chance for the desolate orphans—interest on that original award of 8,873 dollars from date of destruction of the property (1813) up to 1832! Result, 10,004 dollars 89 cents for the indigent Fishers. So now we have: First, 8,873 dollars damages; second, interest on it from 1832 to 1848, 8,997 dollars 94 cents; third; interest on it dated back to 1813, 10,004 dollars 89 cents. Total, 27,875 dollars 83 cents! What better investment for a great-grandchild than to get the Indians to burn a cornfield for him sixty or seventy years before his birth, and plausibly lay it on lunatic United States troops?

4. Strange as it may seem, the Fishers let Congress alone for five years—or, what is perhaps more likely, failed to make themselves heard by Congress for that length of time. But at last, in 1854, they got a hearing. They persuaded Congress to pass an Act requiring the Auditor to re-examine their case. But this time they stumbled upon the misfortune of an honest Secretary of the Treasury (Mr. James Guthrie), and he spoiled

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everything. He said, in very plain language, that the Fishers were not only not entitled to another cent, but that those children of many sorrows and acquainted with grief *had been paid too much already.*

5. Therefore another interval of rest and silence ensued—an interval which lasted four years, viz., till 1858. The "right man in the right place" was then Secretary of War—John B. Floyd, of peculiar renown! Here was a master intellect; here was the very man to succour the suffering heirs of dead and forgotten Fisher. They came up from Florida with a rush—a great tidal wave of Fishers freighted with the same old musty documents about the same immortal corn-fields of their ancestor. They straightway got an Act passed transferring the Fisher matter from the dull Auditor to the ingenuous Floyd. What did Floyd do? He said "*IT WAS PROVED that the Indians destroyed everything they could before the troops entered in pursuit.*" He considered, therefore, that what they destroyed must have consisted of "*the houses with all their con-*

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tents, and the liquor" (the most trifling part of the destruction, and set down at only 3,200 dollars all told), and that the Government troops then drove them off and calmly proceeded to destroy—

Two hundred and twenty acres of corn in the field, thirty-five acres of wheat, and nine hundred and eighty-six head of live stock! [What a singularly intelligent army we had in those days, according to Mr. Floyd—though not according to the Congress of 1832.]

So Mr. Floyd decided that the Government was not responsible for that 3,200 dollars worth of rubbish which the Indians destroyed, but was responsible for the property destroyed by the troops—which property consisted of (I quote from the printed U. S. Senate document)—

Corn at Bassett's creek	:	:	:	\$3,000
Cattle	.	.	.	5,000
Stock hogs	.	.	.	1,050
Drove hogs	.	.	.	1,204
Wheat	.	.	.	350
Hides	.	.	.	4,000
Corn on the Alabama river	.	.	.	<u>3,500</u>
				<u>\$18,104</u>

That sum, in his report, Mr. Floyd calls the "*full value* of the property destroyed by the troops." He allows that sum to the starving Fishers, TOGETHER WITH INTEREST FROM 1813. From this new sum total the amounts already paid to the Fishers were deducted, and then the cheerful remainder (a fraction under *forty thousand dollars*) was handed to them, and again they retired to Florida in a condition of temporary tranquillity. Their ancestor's farm had now yielded them, altogether, nearly *sixty-seven thousand dollars* in cash.

6. Does the reader suppose that that was the end of it? Does he suppose those diffident Fishers were satisfied? Let the evidence show. The Fishers were quiet just two years. Then they came swarming up out of the fertile swamps of Florida with their same old documents, and besieged Congress once more. Congress capitulated on the first of June, 1860, and instructed Mr. Floyd to overhaul those papers again, and pay that bill. A Treasury clerk was ordered to go through those papers and report to Mr. Floyd what

amount was still due the emaciated Fishers. This clerk (I can produce him whenever he is wanted) discovered what was apparently a glaring and recent forgery in the papers, whereby a witness's testimony as to the price of corn in Florida in 1813 was made to name double the amount which that witness had originally specified as the price! The clerk not only called his superior's attention to this thing, but in making up his brief of the case called particular attention to it in writing. That part of the brief *never got before Congress*, nor has Congress ever yet had a hint of a forgery existing among the Fisher papers. Nevertheless, on the basis of the doubled prices (and totally ignoring the clerk's assertion that the figures were manifestly and unquestionably a recent forgery), Mr. Floyd remarks in his new report that "the testimony, *particularly in regard to the corn crops, DEMANDS A MUCH HIGHER ALLOWANCE than any heretofore* made by the Auditor or myself." So he estimates the crop at *sixty bushels* to the acre (double what Florida acres produce), and then virtuously allows pay for only half

the crop, *but allows two dollars and a half* a bushel for that half, when there are rusty old books and documents in the Congressional library to show just what the Fisher testimony showed before the forgery, viz.: that in the fall of 1813 corn was only worth from 1 dollar 25 cents to 1 dollar 50 cents a bushel. Having accomplished this, what does Mr. Floyd do next? Mr. Floyd ("with an earnest desire to execute truly the legislative will," as he piously remarks) goes to work and makes out an entirely new bill of Fisher damages, and in this new bill he placidly *ignores the Indians* altogether—puts no particle of the destruction of the Fisher property upon them, but, even repenting him of charging them with burning the cabins and drinking the whisky and breaking the crockery, lays the *entire* damage at the door of the imbecile United States troops, down to the very last item! And not only that, but uses the forgery to double the loss of corn at "Bassett's creek," and uses it again to absolutely *treble* the loss of corn on the "Alabama river." This new and ably conceived and executed bill of Mr.

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Floyd's figures up as follows (I copy again from the printed U. S. Senate document) :

*The United States in account with the legal representatives
of George Fisher, deceased.*

1813.—To 550 head of cattle, at \$10 . . .	\$5,500 00
To 86 head of drove hogs	1,204 00
To 350 head of stock hogs	1,750 00
To 100 ACRES OF CORN ON BASSETT'S CREEK	6,000 00
To 8 barrels of whisky	350 00
To 2 barrels of brandy	230 00
To 1 barrel of rum	70 00
To dry goods and merchandise in store	1,100 00
To 35 acres of wheat	350 00
To 2000 hides	4,000 00
To furs and hats in store	600 00
To crockery ware in store	100 00
To smiths' and carpenters' tools	250 00
To houses burned and destroyed	600 00
To 4 dozen bottles of wine	48 00
1814.—To 120 acres of corn on Alabama river	9,500 00
To crops of peas, fodder, etc.	3,250 00
Total	\$34,952 00
To interest on \$22,202, from July, 1813, to November, 1860, 47 years and 4 months	63,053 68
To interest on \$12,750, from September, 1814, to November, 1860, 46 years and 2 months	35,317 50
Total	\$133,323 18

He puts everything in, this time. He does

not even allow that the Indians destroyed the crockery or drank the four dozen bottles of (currant) wine. When it came to supernatural comprehensiveness in "gobbling," John B. Floyd was without his equal, in his own or any other generation. Subtracting from the above total the 67,000 dollars already paid to George Fisher's implacable heirs, Mr. Floyd announced that the Government was still indebted to them in the sum of *sixty-six thousand five hundred and nineteen dollars and eighty-five cents*, which," Mr. Floyd complacently remarks, "will be paid, accordingly, to the administrator of the estate of George Fisher, deceased, or to his attorney in fact."

But, sadly enough for the destitute orphans, a new President came in just at this time, Buchanan and Floyd went out, and they never got their money. The first thing Congress did in 1861 was to rescind the resolution of June 1, 1860, under which Mr. Floyd had been ciphering. Then Floyd (and doubtless the heirs of George Fisher likewise) had to give up financial business for a

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while and go into the Confederate army and serve their country.

Were the heirs of George Fisher killed ? No. They are back now at this very time (July, 1870), beseeching Congress, through that blushing and diffident creature, Garrett Davis, to commence making payments again on their interminable and insatiable bill of damages for corn and whisky destroyed by a gang of irresponsible Indians, so long ago that even Government red-tape has failed to keep consistent and intelligent track of it.

Now, the above are facts. They are history. Any one who doubts it can send to the Senate Document Department of the Capitol for H. R. Ex. Doc. No. 21, 36th Congress, 2nd Session, and for S. Ex. Doc. No. 106, 41st Congress, 2nd Session, and satisfy himself. The whole case is set forth in the first volume of the Court of Claims Reports.

It is my belief that as long as the continent of America holds together, the heirs of George Fisher, deceased, will still make pilgrimages to Washington from the swamps

GEORGE FISHER, DECEASED. 61

of Florida, to plead for just a little more cash on their bill of damages (even when they received the last of that sixty-seven thousand dollars, they said it was only *one-fourth* what the Government owed them on that fruitful cornfield); and as long as they choose to come, they will find Garrett Davises to drag their vampire schemes before Congress. This is not the only hereditary fraud (if fraud it is—which I have before repeatedly remarked is not proven) that is being quietly handed down from generation to generation of fathers and sons, through the persecuted Treasury of the United States.

THE NEW CRIME.

LEGISLATION NEEDED.

THIS country, during the last thirty or forty years, has produced some of the most remarkable cases of insanity of which there is any mention in history. For instance, there was the Baldwin case, in Ohio, twenty-two years ago. Baldwin, from his boyhood up, had been of a vindictive, malignant, quarrelsome nature. He put a boy's eye out once, and never was heard upon any occasion to utter a regret for it. He did many such things. But at last he did something that was serious. He called at a house just after dark, one evening, knocked, and when the occupant came to the door, shot him dead, and then tried to escape but was captured,

Two days before, he had wantonly insulted a helpless cripple, and the man he afterward took swift vengeance upon with an assassin bullet had knocked him down. Such was the Baldwin case. The trial was long and exciting; the community was fearfully wrought up. Men said this spiteful, bad-hearted villain had caused grief enough in his time, and now he should satisfy the law. But they were mistaken. Baldwin was *insane* when he did the deed—they had not thought of that. By the arguments of counsel it was shown that at half-past ten in the morning on the day of the murder, Baldwin became insane, and remained so for eleven hours and a half exactly. This just covered the case comfortably, and he was acquitted. Thus, if an unthinking and excited community had been listened to instead of the arguments of counsel, a poor crazy creature would have been held to a fearful responsibility for a mere freak of madness. Baldwin went clear, and although his relatives and friends were naturally incensed against the community for their injurious suspicions and remarks, they

said let it go for this time, and did not prosecute. The Baldwins were very wealthy. This same Baldwin had momentary fits of insanity twice afterward, and on both occasions killed people he had grudges against. And on both these occasions the circumstances of the killing were so aggravated, and the murders so seemingly heartless and treacherous, that if Baldwin had not been insane he would have been hanged without the shadow of a doubt. As it was, it required all his political and family influence to get him clear in one of the cases, and cost him not less than 10,000 dollars to get clear in the other. One of these men he had notoriously been threatening to kill for twelve years. The poor creature happened, by the merest piece of ill-fortune, to come along a dark alley at the very moment that Baldwin's insanity came upon him, and so he was shot in the back with a gun loaded with slugs.

Take the case of Lynch Hackett, of Pennsylvania. Twice, in public, he attacked a German butcher by the name of Bemis Feld-

ner, with a cane, and both times Feldner whipped him with his fists. Hackett was a vain, wealthy, violent gentleman, who held his blood and family in high esteem, and believed that a reverent respect was due his great riches. He brooded over the shame of his chastisement for two weeks, and then, in a momentary fit of insanity, armed himself to the teeth, rode into town, waited a couple of hours until he saw Feldner coming down the street with his wife on his arm, and then, as the couple passed the doorway in which he had partially concealed himself, he drove a knife into Feldner's neck, killing him instantly. The widow caught the limp form and eased it to the earth. Both were drenched with blood. Hackett jocosely remarked to her that as a professional butcher's recent wife she could appreciate the artistic neatness of the job that left her in a condition to marry again, in case she wanted to. This remark, and another which he made to a friend, that his position in society made the killing of an obscure citizen simply an "eccentricity" instead of a crime, were shown to be evidences of insanity,

and so Hackett escaped punishment. The jury were hardly inclined to accept these as proofs, at first, inasmuch as the prisoner had never been insane before the murder, and under the tranquillising effect of the butchering had immediately regained his right mind—but when the defence came to show that a third cousin of Hackett's wife's stepfather was insane, and not only insane, but had a nose the very counterpart of Hackett's, it was plain that insanity was hereditary in the family, and Hackett had come by it by legitimate inheritance. Of course the jury then acquitted him. But it was a merciful providence that Mrs. H.'s people had been afflicted as shown, else Hackett would certainly have been hanged.

However, it is not possible to recount all the marvellous cases of insanity that have come under the public notice in the last thirty or forty years. There was the Durgin case in New Jersey three years ago. The servant girl, Bridget Durgin, at dead of night, invaded her mistress's bedroom, and carved the lady literally to pieces with a knife. Then

she dragged the body to the middle of the floor, and beat and banged it with chairs and such things. Next she opened the feather beds and strewed the contents around, saturated everything with kerosene, and set fire to the general wreck. She now took up the young child of the murdered woman in her blood-smeared hands, and walked off, through the snow, with no shoes on, to a neighbour's house a quarter of a mile off, and told a string of wild, incoherent stories about some men coming and setting fire to the house; and then she cried piteously, and without seeming to think there was anything suggestive about the blood upon her hands, her clothing, and the baby, volunteered the remark that she was afraid those men had murdered her mistress! Afterward, by her own confession and other testimony, it was proved that the mistress had always been kind to the girl, consequently there was no revenge in the murder; and it was also shown that the girl took nothing away from the burning house, not even her own shoes, and consequently robbery was not the motive. Now the reader

says, "Here comes that same old plea of insanity again." But the reader has deceived himself this time. No such plea was offered in her defence. The judge sentenced her, nobody persecuted the Governor with petitions for her pardon, and she was promptly hanged.

There was that youth in Pennsylvania, whose curious confession was published a year ago. It was simply a conglomeration of incoherent drivel from beginning to end—and so was his lengthy speech on the scaffold afterward. For a whole year he was haunted with a desire to disfigure a certain young woman, so that no one would marry her. He did not love her himself, and did not want to marry her, but he did not want anybody else to do it. He would not go anywhere with her, and yet was opposed to anybody else's escorting her. Upon one occasion he declined to go to a wedding with her, and when she got other company, lay in wait for the couple by the road, intending to make them go back or kill the escort. After spending sleepless nights over his ruling desire for

a full year, he at last attempted its execution—that is, attempted to disfigure the young woman. It was a success. It was permanent. In trying to shoot her cheek (as she sat at the supper table with her parents and brothers and sisters) in such a manner as to mar its comeliness, one of his bullets wandered a little out of the course, and she dropped dead. To the very last moment of his life he bewailed the ill luck that made her move her face just at the critical moment. And so he died apparently about half persuaded that somehow it was chiefly her own fault that she got killed. This idiot was hanged. The plea of insanity was not offered.

Insanity certainly is on the increase in the world, and crime is dying out. There are no longer any murders—none worth mentioning, at any rate. Formerly, if you killed a man, it was possible that you were insane—but now if you (having friends and money) kill a man it is *evidence* that you are a lunatic.

In these days, too, if a person of good

family and high social standing steals anything, they call it *kleptomania*, and send him to the lunatic asylum. If a person of high standing squanders his fortune in dissipation and closes his career with strychnine or a bullet, "Temporary Aberration" is what was the trouble with *him*.

Is not this insanity plea becoming rather common? Is it not so common that the reader confidently expects to see it offered in every criminal case that comes before the courts? And is it not so cheap, and so common, and often so trivial, that the reader smiles in derision when the newspaper mentions it? And is it not curious to note how very often it wins acquittal for the prisoner? Lately it does not seem possible for a man to so conduct himself, before killing another man, as not to be manifestly insane. If he talks about the stars he is insane. If he appears nervous and uneasy an hour before the killing he is insane. If he weeps over a great grief, his friends shake their heads and fear that he is "not right." If, an hour after the murder he seems ill at ease,

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pre-occupied, and excited, he is unquestionably insane.

Really, what we want now is not laws against crime, but a law against *insanity*. There is where the true evil lies.

LIONIZING MURDERERS.

I HAD heard so much about the celebrated fortune-teller, Madame —, that I went to see her yesterday. She has a dark complexion naturally, and this effect is heightened by artificial aids which cost her nothing. She wears curls—very black ones, and I had an impression that she gave their native attractiveness a lift with rancid butter. She wears a reddish check handkerchief cast loosely around her neck, and it was plain that her other one is slow getting back from the wash. I presume she takes snuff; at any rate something resembling it had lodged among the hairs sprouting from her upper lip. I know she likes garlic—I knew that as soon as she

sighed. She looked at me searchingly for nearly a minute, with her black eyes, and then said—

“It is enough. Come!”

She started down a very dark and dismal corridor, I stepping close after her. Presently she stopped and said that as the way was crooked and so dark, perhaps she had better get a light. But it seemed ungallant to allow a woman to put herself to so much trouble for me, and so I said—

“It is not worth while, madam. If you will heave another sigh, I think I can follow it.”

So we got along all right. Arrived at her official and mysterious den, she asked me to tell her the date of my birth, the exact hour of that occurrence, and the colour of my grandmother's hair. I answered as accurately as I could. Then she said—

“Young man, summon your fortitude—do not tremble. I am about to reveal the past.”

“Information concerning the *future* would be, in a general way, more—”

“Silence! You have had much trouble

some joy, some good fortune, some bad.
Your great grandfather was hanged."

"That is a 1—"

"Silence! Hanged, sir. But it was not
his fault. He could not help it."

"I am glad you do him justice."

"Ah—grieve, rather, that the jury did.
He was hanged. His star crosses yours in
the fourth division, fifth sphere. Conse-
quently you will be hanged also."

"In view of this cheerful—"

"I *must* have silence. Yours was not, in
the beginning, a criminal nature, but circum-
stances changed it. At the age of nine you
stole sugar. At the age of fifteen you stole
money. At twenty you stole horses. At
twenty-five you committed arson. At thirty,
hardened in crime, you became an editor.
You are now a public lecturer. Worse things
are in store for you. You will be sent to
Congress. Next, to the penitentiary. Finally,
happiness will come again—all will be well—
you will be hanged."

I was now in tears. It seemed hard
enough to go to Congress. But to be

hanged—this was too sad, too dreadful. The woman seemed surprised at my grief. I told her the thoughts that were in my mind. Then she comforted me.

"Why, man,"* she said, "hold up your

* In this paragraph the fortune-teller details the exact history of the Pike-Brown assassination case in New Hampshire, from the succouring and saving of the stranger Pike by the Browns, to the subsequent hanging and coffining of that treacherous miscreant. She adds nothing, invents nothing, exaggerates nothing (see any New England paper for November, 1869). This Pike-Brown case is selected merely as a type, to illustrate a custom that prevails, not in New Hampshire alone, but in every State in the union,—I mean the sentimental custom of visiting, petting, glorifying, and snuffling over murderers like this Pike, from the day they enter the jail under sentence of death until they swing from the gallows. The following extract from *Temple Bar* (1866) reveals the fact that this custom is not confined to the United States:—"On December 31st, 1841, a man named John Johnes, a shoemaker, murdered his sweetheart, Mary Hallam, the daughter of a respectable labourer, at Mansfield, in the county of Nottingham. He was executed on March 23rd, 1842. He was a man of unsteady habits, and gave way to violent fits of passion. The girl declined his addresses, and he said if he did not have her no one else should. After he had inflicted the first wound, which was not immediately fatal, she begged for her life, but seeing him resolved, asked for time to

head—*you* have nothing to grieve about. Listen. You will live in New Hampshire. In your sharp need and distress the Brown family will succour you—such of them as Pike the assassin left alive. They will be benefactors to you. When you shall have grown fat upon their bounty, and are grateful and happy, you will desire to make some modest return for these things, and so you will go to the house some night and brain the whole family with an axe. You will rob the dead bodies of your benefactors, and dis-

pray. He said that he would pray for both, and completed the crime. The wounds were inflicted by a shoemaker's knife, and her throat was cut barbarously. After this he dropped on his knees some time and prayed God to have mercy on two unfortunate lovers. He made no attempt to escape, and confessed the crime. After his imprisonment he behaved in the most decorous manner; he won upon the good opinion of the gaol chaplain, and he was visited by the Bishop of Lincoln. It does not appear that he expressed any contrition for the crime, but seemed to pass away with triumphant certainty that he was going to rejoin his victim in heaven. *He was visited by some pious and benevolent ladies of Nottingham, some of whom declared he was a child of God, if ever there was one. One of the ladies sent him a white camellia to wear at his execution.*"

burse your gains in riotous living among the rowdies and courtezans of Boston. Then you will be arrested, tried, condemned to be hanged, thrown into prison. Now is your happy day. You will be converted—you will be converted just as soon as every effort to compass pardon, commutation or reprieve has failed—and then! Why, then, every morning and every afternoon, the best and purest young ladies of the village will assemble in your cell and sing hymns. This will show that assassination is respectable. Then you will write a touching letter, in which you will forgive all those recent Browns. This will excite the public admiration. No public can withstand magnanimity. Next, they will take you to the scaffold, with great eclat, at the head of an imposing procession composed of clergymen, officials, citizens generally, and young ladies walking pensively two and two, and bearing bouquets and immortelles. You will mount the scaffold, and while the great concourse stand uncovered in your presence, you will read your sappy little speech which the minister has written for you. And then,

in the midst of a grand and impressive silence, they will swing you into per—Paradise, my son. There will not be a dry eye on the ground. You will be a hero! Not a rough there but will envy you. Not a rough there but will resolve to emulate you. And next, a great procession will follow you to the tomb—will weep over your remains—the young ladies will sing again the hymns made dear by sweet associations connected with the jail, and as a last tribute of affection, respect, and appreciation of your many sterling qualities, they will walk two and two around your bier and strew wreaths of flowers on it. And lo, you are canonised! Think of it, son—ingrate, assassin, robber of the dead, drunken brawler among thieves and harlots in the slums of Boston one month, and the pet of the pure and innocent daughters of the land the next! A bloody and hateful devil—a bewept, bewailed and sainted martyr—all in a month! Fool!—so noble a fortune and yet you sit here grieving!"

"No, madam," I said, "you do me wrong, you do indeed. I am perfectly satisfied. I

did not know before that my great grandfather was hanged, but it is of no consequence. He has probably ceased to bother about it by this time—and I have not commenced yet. I confess, madam, that I do something in the way of editing and lecturing, but the other crimes you mention have escaped my memory. Yet I must have committed them—you would not deceive an orphan. But let the past be as it was, and let the future be as it may—these are nothing. I have only cared for one thing. I have always felt that I should be hanged some day, and somehow the thought has annoyed me considerably—but if you can only assure me that I shall be hanged in New Hampshire——”

“Not a shadow of a doubt!”

“Bless you, my benefactress!—excuse this embrace—you have removed a great load from my breast. To be hanged in New Hampshire is happiness—it leaves an honoured name behind a man, and introduces him at once into the best New Hampshire society in the other world.”

I then took leave of the fortune-teller.
But seriously, is it well to glorify a murderous
villain on the scaffold, as Pike was glorified
in New Hampshire? Is it well to turn the
penalty for a bloody crime into a reward?
Is it just to do it? Is it safe?

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